



CITY OF READING

Redistricting Commission

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

6:30 pm

Virtual Meeting

3rd Floor Conference Room

Agenda

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the public is prohibited from physically attending the meetings. The meetings can be viewed LIVE while the meeting is taking place via the Zoom link below, via the dial-in phone number and on Facebook. The recordings of the meeting will also be posted on the City's website after the meeting

Public Comment Instructions:

- To comment at the meeting, citizens can register by calling or emailing the City Clerk's Office by noon on the day of the meeting. Instructions to access the virtual meeting app or dial-in will be provided upon registration. Call 610-655-6205 or e-mail [**council@readingpa.gov**](mailto:council@readingpa.gov)
- Public comment for meetings will also be accepted in writing by noon on the day of the meeting through an e-mail to [**council@readingpa.gov**](mailto:council@readingpa.gov). The message must clearly be marked as Public Comment. The comment received in writing will be read into the record at the meeting.
- Those speaking should limit their comments to no longer than 5 minutes

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://readingpa.zoom.us/j/82650971256?pwd=dEpRMkw0VkJwa1BVekZQZVVjRTBuUT09>

Meeting ID: 826 5097 1256

Passcode: 822979

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- I. WelcomeM. Golembiewski
- II. Approval of December Meeting Summary
- III. Recap of Requirements – Administrative Code & Fed. Statute....M. Golembiewski
- IV. Mapping Proposals to Date.....All
- IV. Recommendations?.....All
- V. Adjourn – Next Meeting February 9th @ 6:30 pm

Two primary requirements govern redistricting. First, **representative districts of a given type (senate, house, congressional, and SBOE, as well as local government single-member districts) must have equal or nearly equal populations.** Second, districts must be drawn in a manner that neither has the purpose nor will have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on the basis of race, color, or language group. These requirements are based in the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (the [Equal Protection Clause](#)), the Fifteenth Amendment (prohibiting voting discrimination based on race), the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, and, for congressional districts, Section 2, Article I, of the U.S. Constitution. As U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas wrote in a landmark 1963 decision requiring the states to ensure that their election processes treat voters equally, “[t]he conception of political equality from the Declaration of Independence, to Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, to the Fifteenth, Seventeenth, and Nineteenth Amendments can mean only one thing—one person, one vote” (Gray v. Sanders, 372 U.S. 368 (1963)). Subsequent Supreme Court decisions have applied the principle to require representative districts at all levels of government—congressional, state, and local—to represent equal numbers of voters.

Administrative Code § 5-214. Redistricting process; Redistricting Advisory Commission.

[Added 5-28-2002 by Ord. No. 23-2002]

A. After each decennial census, Council shall, within 60 days after the receipt of the census information from the federal government, appoint a Redistricting Advisory Commission. Each Council member shall appoint one person from his/her respective district. The President of Council shall select one member to represent the at-large community. The Planning Commission will be asked to assign two current members to the Advisory Commission.

B. This Redistricting Advisory Commission shall review and compare the new and old census information with the current Council District configuration. This group shall prepare

and present a redistricting proposal(s) to the full body of Council in no less than 120 days after their appointment.

C. The district proposals shall give strong consideration to the combination of neighborhoods that are continuous but that share similar quality-of-life issues. This configuration will support the principle of electing representatives that can easily represent the voice of the community they represent. The Advisory Commission shall also consider the federal redistricting laws.

D. Council shall hold a minimum of one public hearing to get public input on the redistricting proposal(s), within 45 days of their receipt of the proposals from the Redistricting Advisory Commission, and shall adopt by ordinance a redistricting plan, either new or status quo, at their next regular business meeting.

§ 1312. Council districts. – Adopted via Bill No. 3-2012

(a) From the date of adoption of this Charter until changed otherwise, the districts are comprised as follows, and one member of the City Council shall be elected from each district:

(1) District 1.

1st Ward
2nd Ward — 1st precinct
4th Ward
5th Ward
18th Ward

(2) District 2.

2nd Ward — 2nd precinct
3rd Ward — 1st precinct
10th Ward
16th Ward
9th Ward — 5th precinct

(3) District 3.

3rd Ward — 2nd precinct
8th Ward
9th Ward — 2nd precinct
11th Ward
17th Ward — 3rd and 5th precincts

(4) District 4.

13th Ward
17th Ward

(5) District 5.

14th Ward — 6th precinct
15th Ward
19th Ward

(6) District 6.

6th Ward
7th Ward
12th Ward — 1st precinct
14th Ward — 1st, 4th and 5th precincts

(b) The boundaries of the existing Council districts, created in 1993 by the Charter Commission, as recommended by the Redistricting Committee, are amended as follows:¹⁴

(1) District 1.

- (i) 1st Ward — 1st precinct.
- (ii) 2nd Ward — 1st precinct.
- (iii) 3rd Ward — 1st precinct.
- (iv) 18th Ward — 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th precincts.
- (2) District 2.
 - (i) 3rd Ward — 2nd precinct.
 - (ii) 8th Ward — 1st precinct.
 - (iii) 10th Ward — 1st precinct.
 - (iv) 16th Ward — 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th precincts.
- (3) District 3.
 - (i) 9th Ward — 2nd and 5th precincts.
 - (ii) 11th Ward — 2nd and 3rd precincts.
 - (iii) 12th Ward — 1st, 3rd and 5th precincts.
 - (iv) 13th Ward — 1st precinct.
- (4) District 4.
 - (i) 13th Ward — 2nd and 5th precincts.
 - (ii) 17th Ward — 1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th and 8th precincts.
- (5) District 5.
 - (i) 14th Ward — 6th precinct.
 - (ii) 15th Ward — 1st, 2nd, 6th and 7th precincts.
 - (iii) 19th Ward — 1st and 2nd precincts.
- (6) District 6.
 - (i) 4th Ward — 1st precinct.
 - (ii) 5th Ward — 1st precinct.
 - (iii) 6th Ward — 1st and 3rd precincts.
 - (iv) 7th Ward — 1st precinct.
 - (v) 14th Ward — 1st, 4th and 5th precincts.

Section 1312. Council Districts. Original Charter approved via referendum

From the date of adoption of this Charter until changed otherwise, the districts are comprised as follows, and one member of the City Council shall be elected from each district:

- (a) **District 1.**
 - 1st Ward
 - 2nd Ward - 1st precinct
 - 4th Ward
 - 5th Ward
 - 18th Ward
- (b) **District 2.**
 - 2nd Ward - 2nd precinct
 - 3rd Ward - 1st precinct
 - 10th Ward
 - 16th Ward
 - 9th Ward - 5th precinct
- (c) **District 3.**
 - 3rd Ward - 2nd precinct
 - 8th Ward

9th Ward - 2nd precinct
11th Ward
17th Ward - 3rd & 5th precincts

(d) **District 4.**
13th Ward
17th Ward

(e) **District 5.**
14th Ward - 6th precinct
15th Ward
19th Ward

(f) **District 6.**
6th Ward
7th Ward
12th Ward - 1st precinct
14th Ward - 1st, 4th & 5th precincts

Response from County Elections Board Solicitor re changes to precincts

1. What prompts the need to eliminate, consolidate or expand precincts?

The need to eliminate, consolidate, or expand precincts is largely driven by population and whether current precincts are adequately accessible to the public and equipped to handle voter traffic on Election Day. However, per the Election Code, new election districts may be formed “so as to suit the convenience of the electors and to promote the public interests.”

2. What process is used to make and approve these decisions?

Generally, we would consider feedback from the public, our pollworkers, and anyone else willing to offer an opinion on the need to eliminate, consolidate, or expand precincts. If there was an identified need to make a change, the matter would be brought before the Election Board for discussion in a public forum. If a change was approved, the Election Code sets forth the formal process for eliminating, consolidating, or expanding precincts. Generally, the process requires a petition to be filed with the Court of Common Pleas. If the petition is filed by an entity other than the County Board of Elections, the Court will refer the petition to the County Board for investigation. Sections 502-504 of the Election Code fully detail this process and the requirements, including boundary requirements, associated with same.

3. How are these changes relayed to those affected?

In addition to being discussed in a public forum, the law requires that the Court cannot rule on the proposed changes until at least 10 days after notice of the proposed changes is posted in at least five public and conspicuous places in the district or districts to be affected, one of which must be posted on or

in the immediate vicinity of the polling place in each such district. The Election Code contains detailed notice requirements, including the process to object to the proposed changes.

4. Are there regulations or controls around the times when these changes can occur?

None specifically, other than the notice requirements outlined above.